

TS-142631
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MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence 21 November 1955

SUBJECT : Project AQUATONE - Summary

1. The project was approved on 1 December 1954. Work was started on the airframe, engines, cameras [redacted] within a matter of weeks on the basis of oral understandings; contracts followed. 25X1

2. The development and production of specialized equipment is in progress in nine different fields as follows:

High altitude long-range aircraft -- Lockheed Aircraft Company

An improved model of the J-57 Jet Engine -- Pratt & Whitney

Optics and cameras -- Perkin-Elmer Company and Hycon Manufacturing Company

[redacted] 25X1

Specialized film and processing techniques -- Eastman Kodak Co.

[redacted] 25X1

Electronic and celestial navigational systems -- Ramo-Wooldridge Co. and Baird Associates

New high altitude pressure suit and other personal equipment - - The Air Research and Development Command

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3. Chronology:

- a. Construction of test site authorized in late May; in use by mid-July.
- b. First aircraft flown 5 August; fourth delivered to the test base 21 November 1955.
- c. First camera configuration flown end of September; second test flown beginning early in November; third due in December. 25X1



4. Performance: Aircraft has attained altitude of 70,000 feet on six occasions. Cameras and electronic gear are functioning in a satisfactory fashion. Principal technical problems: 25X1

- a. Fuel control to ensure reliable engine operation at altitude.
- b. Maintenance of air pressure in equipment bay sufficient for reliable camera operation.
- c. Navigational systems and techniques.

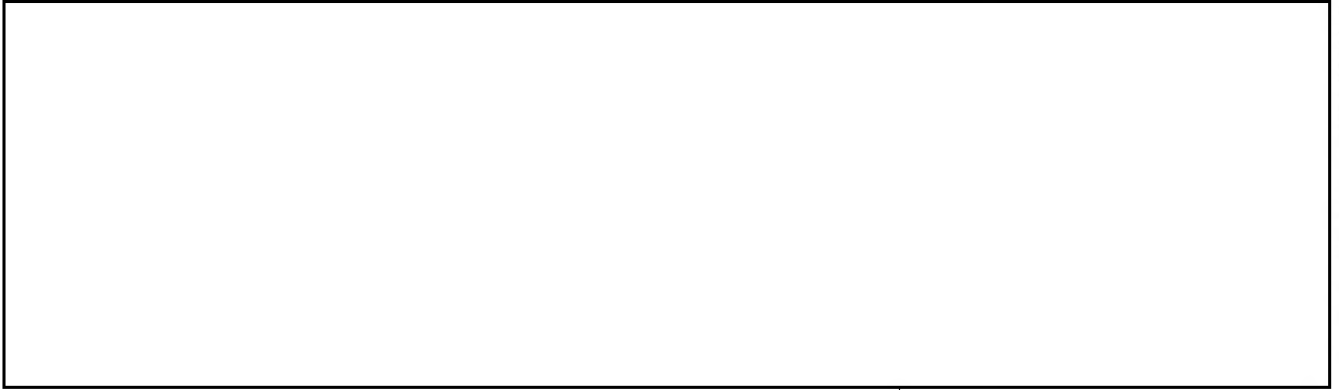
All three believed to be on their way to solution.

5. Status: Agreement with the Air Force on organization and lines of command concluded on 2 August 1955 provides for joint task force, predominantly civilian, technically within CIA but subject to direct control by Quarles and Twining on one side; DCI and General Cabell on the other. 25X1



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RICHARD M. BISSELL, JR.
Project Director